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tom, since the tooth's impression was a man's own, and presented a test in case of forgery. But this reason does not hold true in this epoch of dentistry, when no man's tooth is his own. . . . I admit that old things may be good things, as old wine, old wives, ay, and an old world. But the world is older and consequently wiser now than it ever was before. . . . Let the legislative and judicial axe be laid to the root of the tree; cut it down, why cumbereth it any longer courts and contracts?"

We hope Mr. Heard will look more carefully into the American, and especially the Georgia reports, before publishing a second edition.

8. — *A Topographical and Historical Description of Boston.* By NATHANIEL B. SHURTLEFF. Boston: Printed by Request of the City Council. 1871. 8vo. pp. 720.

THERE are books of topography and local history more amusing than this, but we should not know where to look for another so complete. Lord Macaulay has made us acquainted with the surroundings of London, as they were when woodcocks were shot on the site of Belgravia, and Montague House, the British Museum of these latter days, stood among pastures and cornfields. But Lord Macaulay never saw the muster-rolls of Hengist and Horsa; still less could he point out the spots on Ludgate Hill where stood the first shanties that stored the harvests of Kent for barter with Baltic iron. Virgil sang of the tame warblers that made the loneliness of the Tiber noisy when the keels of Æneas first ploughed up its yellow flood. But this was Virgil's imagination conjuring up the scene, not his knowledge depicting it. Dr. Shurtleff (no more a Virgil than a Macaulay) undertakes to narrate the primordial as well as the later story of a town, among the oldest of the New World, which has become a somewhat noted scene of commerce, wealth, and culture. He pretends to tell it with authentic details, from the time when William Blackstone lived alone, on Shawmut, by the generous spring now dry in Louisburg Square, — through the times when the English inhabitants who came next rejoiced in the facilities they found for fencing out the wolves and foxes from their folds and hen-roosts, — through the times when the obstinate townsmen were hunted by Quakers, and turned upon them savagely, — through the times when Boston deposed a king's governor, anticipating the news of the Revolution which put an end to the royal line of Stuart, — through the times when it blazed with bonfires for the fall of Louisburg and the conquest of Canada, — through the times of the Stamp Act riots, the destruction of the East India Company's tea, the *Masacre* in State Street, and the battles of Concord and Bunker Hill.

He composes a primeval Directory, indicating who lived where, while neighborhoods were growing and bare spaces were filling up. He tells what important men were buried under what sods, from the day when the good emigrant son-in-law of the Puritan Earl of Lincoln was laid down to his sacred rest in the first Boston grave. He follows the fortunes of springs and wells with a tender zest that might seem caught from the writer of Genesis. He luxuriates in the turf of Boston Common, and analyzes and criticises the soil that under different municipal administrations has starved or made it green. He knows when, and by what hand, this and that great elm was set in the ground, and how it has conducted itself in its relations to the weather of two hundred and fifty years. That one small head can carry all he knows of this lore is amazing. Surveys, deeds, wills, colonial, provincial, municipal, and judicial acts, popular and family traditions, church registers, records of births, deaths, and marriages, are but a portion of the sources whence contributions are drawn to the mass of heterogeneous facts which he has assorted and grouped for the curious reader's satisfaction.

Boston has undergone more changes than most larger cities. The bold features of its original conformation have been all effaced by art. Its hills have been levelled, its ponds filled up, its surrounding shallows covered to a height above the tides. In very many instances costly structures have been more than once levelled and restored on the same site within the last fifty years. As nature made the peninsula, it was but a little more than two miles long, with an average width of less than a mile, and an area of less than a thousand acres. When, after the great fire of 1760, old William Palfrey restored his burnt house on the lot midway between Congress Street and Devonshire Street, on the north side of Water Street, sloops used to come up, and unload materials before his door. The bookseller's shop at the corner of Washington Street and School Street, lately occupied by Messrs. Ticknor and Fields, is a hundred and fifty years old, but it is one of an extremely small number of buildings that antedate the present century. For a hundred years after 1710, Boston scarcely increased its population. Nearly all of its beauty that is due to man's work is the product of less time than belongs to two generations. The saunterer down Beacon Street,

“Aurea nunc, olim sylvestribus horrida dumis,”

goes breathing the fragrance of hyacinths and jonquils in the shadow of palatial dwellings. We first trod it when a plank walk aided the steps from the State House to the water, and three ancient houses and one modern were all that stood along the way, and we laid our clothes on

rocks beneath the most westerly hillock on the Common, to bathe in the salt water that plashed up to its foot.

Of course we do not undertake to follow Dr. Shurtleff's steps with our critical lantern, through all, or anything like all, the extent and the labyrinths of his explorations. It would be toilsome, and it would be hazardous. Our memory and antiquarian reading, as far as they serve, answer to his descriptions, with no exception worthy of note. Since archæology, so unlike law, *de minimis curat*, we will overcome our diffidence so far as to dissent from his opinion as to the origin of Julien soup. We strongly incline to think that the toothsome concoction was relished, under the name of *potage à la Julienne*, long before the days of our Boston Soyer. And if our memory does not cheat us, it was a gallant officer of the army, and not of the sister service, who caused the servant of the mysterious recluse of Apple Island to be flogged, and who thereupon learned from Charles Jackson, of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, that law in that Commonwealth was an awkward thing to do battle against.

9. — *History of Rye, West Chester County, New York*, 1660–1870.

By CHARLES W. BAIRD. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co. pp. 570. 1871.

WHEN, eighty years ago, our Massachusetts Historical Society was founded, one field of historical research they proposed to themselves for exploration was, the history of towns. These valuable compendiums of local history have since been greatly multiplied, and, assuming more considerable proportions, been given to the world in separate volumes. It is estimated that more than one hundred such works have been published relating to towns in this State, as many more to those in other parts of New England. They preserve for family history, its dates, alliances, and incidents, and afford a clearer insight than can in any other way be gained of the modes of life, and household economies of former generations. They afford us, besides, a glimpse beyond into the forest primeval of the races displaced. As the last feeble remnants of once powerful tribes are passing away, our interest deepens in their story. In the narrations sent home soon after the settlement, all that was then known of the Indians is to be found, but from later sources our knowledge of what they were has become much more extensive and exact. In Connecticut, where the material is unusually abundant, the inquiry has been pursued by scholars especially fitted for their task. The history of the Indian tribes by De Forest is replete with information with regard to them; and another authority, said to be the only